

FIRST CHAPTER OF THE *ORNAMENT FOR CLEAR REALIZATION* BY MAITREYA:

The first chapter of the *Ornament for Clear Realization* (in short: the *Ornament* or in Sanskrit: Abhisamaya-alaṅkāra) presents the *exalted knower of aspects*, i.e. the omniscient mind of a Buddha. Thus, the first chapter explains the meaning of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* by way of presenting the omniscient mind. The reason for presenting the omniscient mind in the beginning of the *Ornament* is to generate enthusiasm and interest in the continuum of the trainee. By studying, contemplating and meditating on the first chapter trainees generate faith and aspiration to attain the result of the Mahayana path – the omniscient mind of a Buddha. This aspiration in turn motivates them to continue to study, contemplate and meditate on the remaining chapters of the *Ornament*.

However, instead of explaining the *exalted knower of aspects* itself, the first chapter presents the *exalted knower of aspects* by way of presenting ten topics that exemplify or illustrate the *exalted knower of aspects*.

These ten topics are:

1. **Bodhicitta** - Bodhicitta is explained first because it is the entryway to the Mahayana path. It refers to a mental consciousness that aspires to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.
2. **Practice instructions** - Aspiring to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings is not enough; one needs to engage in the practice of study, contemplation and meditation on the Mahayana practice instructions of the Buddha and other masters.
3. **The path of preparation** - Having generated Bodhicitta on the Mahayana path of accumulation and having studied, contemplated, and meditated on emptiness, etc. by relying on the Mahayana practice instructions the practitioner then enters the Mahayana path of preparation. The path of preparation is entered when the practitioner cultivates a union of calm abiding and special insight that realizes emptiness conceptually.
4. **Buddha nature/essence/lineage** - The nature of the mind that engages in Mahayana practice is the mind's *lack of true existence*. This lack of true existence of the mental consciousness is called 'Buddha nature' and serves as the basis for Mahayana practice. Having reached the path of accumulation and so forth one is now also able to realize that one possesses Buddha nature.
5. **Objects of focus** - Having explained the basis of Mahayana practice, which is Buddha nature, the *Ornament* proceeds to explain the objects of focus of Mahayana practice.
6. **The three great objectives** - This topic is concerned with the objectives or the purposes of Mahayana practice, i.e. it is concerned with the objectives for studying, contemplating and meditating on the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras.
7. **Armor-like practice** - Having discussed the basis, objects of focus and objectives of Mahayana practice, the Ornament now explains the actual practice starting with armor-like practice. Armor-like practice deals with the development of the right motivation, which serves as an armor or protection against unfavorable conditions.
8. **Engaged practice** - After the motivation for practice, the engaged practice is explained. Engaged practice is concerned with the development of calm abiding, the six perfections, the Arya paths such as the path of seeing, etc., the four immeasurables and so forth.
9. **Practice of accumulation** - This topic is concerned with the practice of the accumulation of great merit and great wisdom.
10. **Practice of definite emergence** - This practice consists of the practice of eight different 'definite emergences' such as the practice of the three great objectives, of equally realizing the emptiness of all phenomena, of endlessly working for the benefit of sentient beings, and so forth.

We discussed the first topic of **Bodhicitta** during the IBD philosophy course in the autumn of 2010 and spring 2011.

The second topic of **practice instructions** itself is relatively short, and we spend only one or two classes in the spring of 2011 expounding on its definition, divisions, and so forth.

However, since **practice instructions** are categorized into ten different topics that are each examined – some quite extensively – it takes quite a long time before students move on to the third topic of the first chapter of the *Ornament*.

The ten topics of **practice instructions** are:

1. **The two truths:** the two truths (conventional and ultimate truths) are explained in order to understand the nature and the aspect of practice
2. **The four noble truths:** the four noble truths are the focal object of practice
3. **The three objects of refuge:** going for refuge to the three jewels such as the Buddha and so forth serves as the basis of one's practice
4. **The diligence of non-adherence:** the diligence of non-adherence counteracts the laziness of adhering to non-virtuous actions and assists practitioners in stabilizing their practice
5. **The diligence of non-weariness:** the diligence of non-weariness counteracts the laziness of feeling disheartened and assists practitioners in increasing their practice
6. **The diligence of thoroughly upholding the [Mahayana] path:** the diligence of thoroughly upholding the [Mahayana] path counteracts the laziness of self-contempt/defeatism and assists practitioners in averting the deterioration of their Mahayana practice
7. **The five sublime eyes:** the five sublime eyes are special powers that practitioners need in order to become more self-sufficient
8. **The six clairvoyances:** the six clairvoyances, are needed in order to quickly complete the accumulation of merit
9. **The path of seeing:** practitioners on the path of seeing have newly cultivated the meditative absorption directly realizing emptiness. The principal function of this meditative absorption is to permanently eliminate the *intellectually acquired* ignorance etc.
10. **The path of meditation:** practitioners on the path of meditation have achieved the cessation of the intellectually acquired ignorance etc. and their meditative absorption directly realizing emptiness now eliminates the *innate* ignorance etc.

The **two truths** were discussed during the IBD philosophy course in the spring of 2011, and the **four noble truths** during the philosophy course in the autumn of 2011.

In the spring of 2012 we examined the **three objects of refuge**.

Next follows the topic of the **three diligences** (the fourth, fifth, and sixth topics of the ten **practice instructions**).

Before presenting the three types of diligence according to Maitreya's *Ornament*, there will be a preparatory presentation of diligence according to Lama Tsongkhapa's *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (Lam Rim Chenmo)* since Lama Tsongkhapa gives a more detailed account of the nature of diligence, of how it is cultivated, and so forth.

The first outline from the *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* is:

Training in the perfection of diligence (i.e. how to train in the perfection of diligence)

This has five further outlines

1. The nature of diligence (i.e. what is diligence)
2. The method for engaging in the practice of diligence (i.e. how to begin the practice of diligence)
3. The categories of diligence
4. How to practice
5. A summary

1. The nature of diligence (i.e. what is diligence)

Diligence is a mental factor that has the aspect of joy/enthusiasm/delight (Tib.: spro ba) and that focuses on virtue.

Shantideva says in his *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds (Bodhisattvacharyāvatāra)*:

What is diligence? It is delight in virtue.

Asanga's *Bodhisattva Levels (Shravaka Bhumi)* describes it as a correct state of mind that delights in accumulating virtue and in working for the welfare of sentient beings, together with the physical, verbal, and mental activities that are motivated by such a state of mind.

